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[P. 148-E]

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269
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291

ABOVE: Ancestor worship. RIGHT: Altar in kung t'ing with statues of invited gods. BELOW: *Tao shih* begins *pai-pai* at midnight before arrival of bride.

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associations with their fellow villagers but they seem also to divorce themselves from the village itself. As they progress in their schooling, they become more and more antagonistic toward many of the village traditions, particularly those with a magical or religious basis. They have learned to regard them as superstition, and feel they are unworthy of their participation. Often, at religious and magical rituals in the village the middle school students, sometimes accompanied by their classmates from other places, can be seen on the sidelines laughing at the "superstition and backwardness" of the participating villagers. This attitude is in part fostered by what they are taught first in the elementary schools, then in the middle schools, and reinforced by their many new contacts with people and ideas from urban centers.

The village seldom has the opportunity to learn new ideas and ways of doing things from these students. Even if some of the students happen to be willing to share their knowledge, the other students' obvious snobbishness and lack of interest hinders the receptivity of the nonscholars to anything the students may propose. Consequently, the advanced education of some of their number produces few direct benefits for the village.

There are also educational offerings in the area which are nonofficial and informal. Among these are sewing classes, either private or offered by the local Farmers' Association for members' daughters. The private schools charge tuition, but the Farmers' Association classes are free. The Farmers' Association also holds classes in farming techniques for village boys. Boys may also be apprenticed to a craftsman for training. Since the practice is not too common in Hsin Hsing village, the few apprentices in the village have been boys of poor and almost landless families. One village boy was apprenticed by his father to a carpenter in Lukang and another to a carpenter in Taipei. Sometimes, village boys or girls are apprenticed to craft shops in Taipei.

ADOLESCENCE

When a boy reaches sixteen[3] an elaborate religious festival marking his transition from child to adult may be held in his honor. This may be done if the boy had been ill as a child and his family in asking the god for help had promised to perform such a ritual or if his family can afford it or wishes to display their economic ability to do so. If the boy had been sickly, thanks are given to the gods at the festival, especially to T'ien Kung (the highest of all gods) for bringing the boy to this stage of development, and requests are made for further help. When such a festival is held, a *tao shih*—a Taoist priest—is called to the village to officiate. (The ritual is similar to the one held at the time of a marriage, which is described in that section of this chapter.)

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The night before the wedding day, starting at midnight, a *pai-pai* is held at the boy's home. A Taoist priest (*tao shih*) officiates at the ceremony, held in honor of T'ien Kung to thank him for guarding the boy so that he could reach marriageable age, and prayers are said for the future of the boy and his family. At the same time, many lesser gods are invited to the *pai-pai* to be worshipped, and statues of these gods (which may belong to other villagers) are brought to the ancestral-worship room of the boy's home. The village orchestra performs during most of this ceremonial to entertain T'ien Kung. Many expensive foods, including at least one whole dressed pig and goat, bottles of wine, and a good deal of paper money are offered in honor of the gods and their soldiers and horses. (A description of the Taoist pantheon is found in Chapter 8.)

The *tao shih* invites the gods to partake of the sacrifices and transmits to them the prayers of the family. In the course of the ritual the *tao shih* and the participating members of the family, including the groom and his father and brothers, simulate trips to heaven and to the underworld to communicate with the gods. A shaman, known as *t'ao t'ung* (his broader functions are also described in detail in Chapter 8), accompanies them on these "trips." He is possessed by a local, less powerful, and important god known as an ambassador god and thus acts as the intermediary between the family and the higher gods. "After all," queried a villager on this point, "can a common man go directly on his own to see and talk with an emperor?"

Much of the food offered at the *pai-pai* is sent the next day as gifts to the girl's family; during the next several days it is fed to the guests who attend the wedding festival as well as the many people, usually *ch'in tsu* or fellow villagers, who help in the preparations and entertainment of the guests at the girl's village. The cost to both sets of parents is very great, and the poorest families save for a long time or borrow money in order to have a proper wedding festival.

While the boy's family is holding the *pai-pai* on the night before the marriage, the girl's family is busy with preparations for the next day. When the marriage broker, accompanied by the carriers bearing more gifts, and the village orchestra arrive, they are fed in the girl's village. Then, they help the girl's family load the many carts with her dowry and the sweet cakes which accompany the bride when she goes to the groom's village in her sedan chair.

The vehicles which carry the gifts to the bride's family and take the dowry back to the groom's village are either rented wheeled carts drawn by men hired in Lukang or trays carried on poles by the groom's *ch'in tsu* and/or fellow villagers. Only a wealthy family can afford to use the many hand-carried trays, since all the carriers must be fed banquet food and those who carry heavy items are given *hung pao* (money wrapped in a red paper packet). Far fewer wheeled carts are

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hsiang Public Office and obtain permission to bury the body in the public cemetery. (Burial in private fields has not been permitted since early in the Japanese period.)

Relatives, including *ch'in tsu*, married daughters, and *ch'in ch'i*, are notified of the death and asked to come to the home of the deceased. Relatives in distant places are notified by means of telegram, special-delivery express letter, or telephone. If their relationship to the deceased was a close one, they too are asked to come to the village. Relatives who live nearby are usually notified of the death by messengers, such as a younger member of the deceased's family or some *ch'in tsu*, friend, or neighbor.

While they are still on the road approaching the village relatives begin to wail, and as they enter the village they fall to their knees and crawl to the house and into the room where the body lies. Someone who was present at the time of the death may crawl out to meet and welcome these relatives and then crawl into the room with them. *Ch'in tsu* relatives and married daughters are expected to wail and crawl both to show their respect for the deceased and to express their sorrow for not being present at the death. The villagers consider it unfilial to be absent when a parent or *ch'in tsu* relative who is older or of a higher generation dies. Many villagers look on and may criticize the arrivals for not wailing loud enough or for not getting down on their hands and knees to crawl soon enough. One may also hear old village women note how filial someone is because of the distance she crawls or the way she wails.

Preparation for the Funeral and Burial

Immediately after the death, arrangements are made for five *tao shih* to come to the village from Lukang to officiate at the funeral. A village funeral may be delayed because the *tao shih* are participating in a funeral elsewhere and are not available immediately. Usually, five *tao shih* form a group and work together with a small orchestra of three or four men who normally accompany them to the ceremony. The group of about eight men usually charges approximately NT $880 (US $10.50).

It is very rare that a Buddhist funeral is held in Hin Hsing or other villages of the area. While most of the villagers worship Buddha and Kuan Yin along with the Taoist hierarchy of gods, they are not Buddhists, and the one such funeral held in recent years was for the old mother of the largest landlord family in the village. This woman was a Buddhist, and while she was still alive had Buddhist nuns come to the village to pray for her.

Virtually all village families willingly assist in the funeral preparations. Most village families are members of one of several "Father-

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764 532 869 rewards for filial and moral behavior and the retribution for unfilial and immoral acts. It seems likely that these gruesome pictures of the punishments and tortures, as well as those which show the forms of reincarnation, make lasting impressions on the young children. In fact, throughout the funeral ceremony there are a variety of opportunities for instructing the young people and children in the moral and filial forms of behavior.

764 [793] [775] There are usually two parts to the actual funeral ceremonial. One is the ritual conducted by the five *tao shih*, in which they pray for and safely guide the spirit of the dead person through the underworld to the Western Paradise (*hsi fang lo yuan*). The second part is the actual burial ritual. Adjuncts to the first part of the funeral ritual are entertainment performed for the spirit of the deceased and a ceremony to send the spirit on its way. These can be and are performed in either order, and it is not infrequent for the ceremony sending off the spirit to be held after the burial—sometimes as much as a week later. The 764 556 length of time devoted to these rituals depends on the availability of the *tao shih* and the financial circumstances of the family of the deceased. A prosperous family (like that of a landlord) which is willing to spend a great deal of money on an elaborate ceremony usually takes several days or even a week or more to complete the ceremony. During the entire period many guests are housed and fed, as is expected of such a family. A poor family, on the other hand, may complete the entire ceremony in one day and one night, ending the next morning with the burial. This short form of funeral is the most common in the village.

764 793 In the Hsin Hsin area, the funeral sequence usually begins with the *tao shih* beating on drums and shooting off firecrackers in order to "frighten away bad spirits." This is done in the courtyard, and both adults and children hide inside the house so they will not be "hit by [come into contact with] a bad spirit." During the first phase of the ritual, the *tao shih*, often accompanied by musicians, chant and pray [798] [531] for the deceased. They wear colorful hats and robes decorated with designs such as the eight trigrams (*pa kua*). They change their robes as they move to successive parts of the ritual. A member of the family is present throughout the rituals, taking part by kneeling behind the *tao shih* and burning incense. This role is assumed by the chief mourner, usually the eldest son, although another member of the family may substitute for him as a representative for the entire family.

764 775 524 526 [465] The chanting and prayers of the *tao shih* are interrupted in the late afternoon when entertainment is provided for the spirit of the deceased. The performance of the juggler or acrobat is traditionally paid for by the married daughters of the deceased. Generally, the charge for such entertainment is NT $180 (US $5). This entertainment is held

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outside in the family's or *tsu* compound's courtyard. A table is set up and a paper ancestral tablet for the deceased is placed on it. Usually, this paper tablet is used by the family for the first year after the death, after which the deceased person's name is transferred to the family line's main wooden ancestral tablet. Today, in addition to the paper tablet a photograph of the deceased is also placed on the table. Then, in order not to expose the spirit of the deceased to the heavens, an open, large black umbrella is tied to the table. The mourners gather at the sides of the table, joined by most of the villagers, who sit or stand in the courtyard to watch the entertainment. Even passersby from other villages join the large audience, and the cheerful reception given the entertainer by the outsiders and even sometimes by the mourners makes it apparent that the spirit of the deceased is not the only one being entertained.

With the completion of this part of the ritual, the members of the *tao shih* group and the several mourners resume chants and prayers in behalf of the deceased which continue long into the night and through to dawn of the next day. This is done in shifts so that the various participants can take time off to eat food furnished by the family and to nap.

During the course of the night a series of ceremonials takes place outside the house and in the *kung t'ing* of the house in preparation for sending off the spirit of the deceased. One ceremony, held outside, simulates the transmission of a letter from the family of the deceased to the underworld. The letter, prepared by the *tao shih*, describes the dead man's life, speaks of his good as well as bad points, and ends with a plea for clemency and forgiveness toward him. All five *tao shih*, carrying flaming torches, conduct the ceremony. One *tao shih* acts as the "forgiveness governor" and carries a paper symbol of the forgiveness governor and the "forgiveness letter." He is followed by three "aides"; together these four men actually run and try to catch the fifth man who is supposed to represent a horse and who carries a *papier-mâché* horse on a pole. The forgiveness governor wants to catch the horse in order to ride it to the underworld to present the forgiveness letter to the gods.

The colorful and exciting ceremony usually attracts a large number of villagers, both adults and children. During the whole spectacle the *tao shih* joke and laugh, which suggests that the ceremony is designed to entertain the audience and the mourners. Some villagers observed that "This ceremony in this very form was passed down from our ancestors, and it is natural and interesting to be so playful since the sad mourners then won't worry so much." When the *tao shih* chase each other and weave in and out they often get tangled up, and each time this happens the horns in the small orchestra are purposely blown

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764 793 522 off-key to add to the comedy. Usually, during the last part of the ceremony, when the forgiveness governor chases the horse at full speed, all the children present applaud and scream with glee. The adults laugh and say "it is all right for the children to do this, since it is so exciting."

764 After the forgiveness letter has been delivered, final preparations are made to simulate the trip of the spirit to the underworld and finally to the Western Paradise. A check is written and signed with the names of [618] relatives and friends, and this, along with millions of dollars of imitation paper money, is burned by the nearest *tsu* relatives, usually members of the immediate family, in the ancestral-worship room. Throughout the ceremony, the room is guarded by two male lineal descendants or close patrilineal relatives of the deceased. They stand covering the door with a straw mat and each holds a large knife in his upraised hand. The purpose of their vigil is to prevent the spirits of any other dead persons, especially if not of the same descent line, or any of 764 various demons, from stealing the money. The ashes of the burned 793 paper money are wrapped up and weighed by a *tao shih* on a standard 804 wooden balance scale as proof to the gods of the large quantity of [522] money offered them. The *tao shih* also pretends to add up the amount of money by using an abacus. Many villagers watch these proceedings with great delight since the *tao shih* clowns about while doing them. The ashes, with a number of other items, are later placed in the coffin and buried with the deceased.

775 With the offering of the money to the gods, the spirit of the dead begins its journey to the underworld and, it is hoped, its eventual 764 journey to the Western Paradise. The ceremony is only a simulation of 536 the trip, and the villagers explain that it is hoped the rite "will have 793 the effect of later easing the spirit's actual trip by showing it the way." A *tao shih* and all descendants of the deceased who are present make the journey, carrying a white banner which represents the spirit of the deceased, an incense pot, the paper ancestral tablet, paper servants, and a paper puppet of the dead person. The group walks in a circle, [867] crossing an imitation bridge over and over again, and as they walk the *tao shih* tells the people of the "ten acts"—how children should act; how daughters-in-law should act; how servants should act; how neighbors should act toward one another; how brothers should act; how wives should act; and so on.

When the underworld has been reached, two *tao shih* and all the mourners and many village adults and children gather in the ancestral-worship room. The *tao shih* act out long dialogues and stories which [538] tell about the trip and the many people, obstacles, and underworld [867] gods which the spirit has encountered along the way. Many of the incidents related are steeped in moral precepts, but they are also humorous and often exciting.

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That these stories, as well as the entire funeral ritual, serve several purposes is recognized by the *tao shih* and many of the villagers. First, the stories tend to stress the importance of filial piety and morality. They teach the villagers that "Parents should love but not spoil their children, because a spoiled child becomes stupid"; "Since the parents take care of the child—the parents feed, school, and find a husband or wife for the child—the child should therefore be filial"; "People must marry, since the parents have given us our bodies and we must give the parents another body—a descendant"; "If you are unfilial to your parents, then your son will be unfilial to you, and besides that you will be punished in the underworld." Some stories emphasize the necessity for cooperation between brothers to hold the family together. These stories draw attention to the importance of filial piety, but their moral precepts are presented in such a way as to poke fun at those present whose behavior has in any way been known to be unfilial. The barbed humor is frequently directed at daughters-in-law who do not sufficiently respect their husbands' families, for example, and who therefore talk too much and so neglect their household duties and family responsibilities.

The second recognized purpose of these rituals is to provide a release for the mourners' grief. The emotional intensity of bereavement is moderated by the humorous stories told by the *tao shih*, as well as by the excitement sometimes created by the ceremonies. One *tao shih*, who also operates a small tailoring shop in Lukang, explained, "I don't really believe that the things we do in these funeral rituals actually do anything for the spirit of the dead person. But since the villagers believe in it and want it done, and will pay for the performance of such rituals, I come and do it. It makes them feel better and besides, when we perform all these exciting ceremonies and tell the funny stories, it makes them laugh and helps them forget their sadness." The extent to which the *tao shih's* opinion is valid is seen again and again during the course of the evening's events, as well as during the performance of the juggler. Often, even the most sincerely grief-stricken are unable to refrain from smiling at some of the stories and comical situations. Some stories are so filled with slapstick comedy that they bring almost hysterical laughter from the mourners.

On the trip to the underworld, the spirit of the deceased is judged. A favorable decision is inevitably reached, and the spirit is given permission to go to the Western Paradise. Once again the participating group goes outside, this time to complete the ritual with the journey to the Western Paradise. A paper sedan chair is set on the ground and an incense pot placed next to it. Then a paper puppet of the deceased, paper servants, and paper money are burned while the mourners wail.

It is nearly dawn when all of this is completed, and afterwards everyone present eats a large breakfast prepared by the village men,

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affairs, the cause of their troubles is often laid to a relative who left no descendants to care for his spirit. It then becomes necessary for the family to placate the spirit by adopting a child as his official descendant and worshipper. All such adoptions are eventually recorded on the ancestral tablet. The name of the adopted child is engraved next to the name of the deceased, along with a note stating that he was adopted for the purpose of continuing the line (*ch'eng szu*).

Buddhism

In the Hsin Hsing village area, Buddhism, at least as an independent religious system, is of negligible importance. While there are visible elements of Buddhism such as the scroll bearing the image of the goddess Kuan Yin, it is difficult to distinguish features of Buddhist ritual from Taoist features. Women take the most active part in all forms of Buddhist worship, and once each year they worship at scattered temples located in the *hsien*. In spite of the mixture of religious images in Buddhist temples, the Buddhist rites are distinctly identified as such.

Popular Taoism

Of the various religious practices discussed thus far, popular Taoism may be said to occupy the most time and attention of the Hsin Hsing villagers. Popular Taoism is a debased derivative of Lao-tze's "Way" and centers around a hierarchy of gods infiltrated by many diverse supernatural beings or forces. Belief in these supernatural entities is derived from the Yin-Yang principle, the concept of the universe as the sum of the infinity of all the positive and negative forces that comprise it. In popular Taoism, the positive and negative forces have become personified; thus, it is not only necessary to have priests (*tao shih*) but shamans (*fa shih* and *t'iao t'ung*) too are needed to conduct religious ceremonies to worship the gods and to perform magical rites to propitiate the evil supernatural beings who might otherwise harm the believers.

The hierarchy of gods in popular Taoism is ranked in order from the highest T'ien Kung, the heavenly God (also referred to by the villagers as Yu Ti, the Jade Emperor), down through others of lesser importance, to an assortment of village gods and private, individual gods at the bottom of the hierarchy. Many are historic personages of the early dynasties, particularly the Sung and T'ang, who have been deified for their remarkable deeds. Their feats are well known, although the stories of some apparently have mythical backgrounds.

The villagers consider the hierarchy of gods to be fashioned on the order of the imperial court of traditional China. They are thus, as described by one of the better educated older villagers, "what would

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very poor but devout pot master for the Earth God realized that the villagers did not intend to contribute to the care of the god's statue. As a pious act he used his own money for this purpose. He was apparently motivated in part by his need for security within the village community. His family is poor and unrelated to any of the other large or small patrilineal kin groups in the village. He appears to have counted on this act to assure his family of assistance at any time of need in the future. And, in fact, his gesture was much appreciated by the village as a whole. It greatly improved his reputation and strengthened his family's relations within the village.

In addition to the village-owned statues which are cared for by the pot masters, there are also several statues of public gods which are owned by individual families and kept in their own family *kung t'ing*. Some families are more devout than others and may spend a great deal of money, sometimes as much as NT $300 to 400 (US $8–11), to purchase a statue of a god. These families generally own a statue of the Earth God and may sometimes purchase the statues of minor local gods to which they have taken a special fancy.

PRIESTS AND SHAMANS

The villagers depend upon specialists to communicate and deal with the gods and other supernatural spirits in their behalf. These specialists are either the Taoist priests known as *tao shih* or the shamans known as *fa shih* and *t'iao t'ung*. Since the powers of these men are not the same, the manner and degree to which they are able to function as intermediaries between the ordinary people and the supernatural varies widely.

The *tao shih*, as a member of a religious priesthood, functions purely as a religious practitioner. He is able to conduct rituals and ceremonies, but has no supernatural powers. The *fa shih* and the *t'iao t'ung*, on the other hand, have definite personal supernatural powers which enable them to cope with evil forces. Of the two, the villagers consider the *fa shih* the more powerful, because he himself has powers which enable him to confront the demons and exorcise them. The *t'iao t'ung* has no power himself but "only borrows his power from the gods"; it is only while he is possessed by a god that he has any supernatural powers.

There are no *tao shih* living in Hsin Hsing. Those who conduct services in Hsin Hsing are usually residents of Lukang. Almost all of them are ordinary family men who do not earn their livelihood by farming but have shops of some kind in the city. They are, so to speak, "their own boss"; their businesses can either be closed temporarily or some employee or member of the family can be left in charge for one,

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793 two, or even three full days at a time when a funeral or some other ceremony must be performed. It would, of course, be impossible for a farmer to engage in activities which might call him away from the harvest or other such imperative activity. Furthermore, most farmers lack the modicum of literacy necessary for the performance of certain ceremonies.

The *tao shih* in Lukang received their training from older members of the priesthood. These men do not belong to an organized church, for there is none in Lukang. In fact, the priesthood itself is loosely organized and informal, although all its members in the area do wear a special signet ring. A man who wishes to become a *tao shih* declares his intention to an established priest and, with the latter's permission, joins his group as a novice. He is given instruction in the various ceremonies and learns how to use the special ritual instruments. As his training progresses, he accompanies other members of the group on their trips into the countryside and assists as they perform ceremonies. Eventually, he either becomes a member of the group in which he received his training or conducts ceremonies as a independent priest.

There are three *fa shih* and three *t'iao t'ung* in Hsin Hsing village 756 serving it and neighboring villages. Actually, these men seldom perform outside the village, and shamans from other villages are occasionally called into Hsin Hsing by people who were not helped by their village shaman or who, for personal reasons, prefer a shaman from another place. This is especially true in the case of a nonresident *fa shih*, an older man, who is considered more powerful than the ones in Hsin Hsing. However, such cases are infrequent, and most people find their own village shaman sufficiently able to meet their needs.

Too, most villagers find it economically advantageous to engage the 756 services of a local shaman rather than an outsider. When the *fa shih* or 465 *t'iao t'ung* is a fellow villager, one is not expected to pay him any fee for his services, but need only feed him after he performs. The food is usually a simple noodle dish or rice and meat soup. Although it is prepared in large quantities in order to feed all the villagers who were present during the shaman's ritual, the cost to the host is small. But when a shaman is called from outside, he must be paid a fee in addition to being fed with the other participants. The money is normally wrapped in a packet of red paper and handed to the shaman. The villagers usually know how much they are expected to pay, and both parties assume that the amount will be adequate. If the family does not give the shaman enough money, the villagers note that "the shaman probably will say nothing, but will not return should he be called."

Most families make every effort to compensate the shaman amply

778 [782] some in observance of a promise made to the gods for fulfilling some previous request.

778 554 203 794 On the interior wall of the temple is a bulletin board topped by an engraved history of the temple and list of donations for its construction. A report of collections and expenditures for the preceding religious event is posted in descending order by amount of donation per household. In this manner, the gods are advised of contributions and every resident and visitor to the community may learn who is important in the village, i.e., the larger the donation, the higher the status.

787 There are two regular means to question the gods. One method involves use of the shen pei which look rather like they were made from a short blunt banana sliced in two lengthwise. After asking a question accompanied by appropriate ritual, the shen pei are dropped on the floor from chest level. There are two falls interpreted as yes and two as no, thus yielding a fifty per cent success probability. The second method of questioning gods involves randomly selecting a fortune stick from a vase. Matching the stick is a fortune on a set of tablets but all fortunes are rather ambiguous and subject to conflicting interpretations.

793 There is no regular priest attached to the temple nor is it on a route of a visiting circuit of priests for the temple is a religious center complete unto itself.

782 592 [869] [764] [993] one individual performs the act while others observe. There are only two kinds of occasions I observed during the study when there are joint performances: a teaching situation with an older individual and a child performing the same rite; or when hired priests collectively participate in a ceremony such as a funeral. Most worship is by an individual representing his family, nuclear up to extended or compound, and often including deceased members.

For 64 of the 66 Sanlei households, one representative, usually the oldest male in the household, worships in the kung t'ing each morning and evening with incense. There is no ritual gathering to observe the worship. Where more than one household share ownership of the kung t'ing, i.e., in a compound, only one representative for the compound is necessary and usual. On the first and fifteenth or second and sixteenth of each lunar month, worship offerings include special rich food such as many meat and fish dishes and the family usually does gather to observe the worship in 59 of the 66 households.

[621] On the community level, there is worship for the various special holidays, but each household's sacrifice is offered separately and returned to be consumed separately. 527 592 594 There are often parties with guests present on special days but even then the food is kept separate in each household. Only in some compounds with a joint kung

756 (master of green grass) in Hsin Tien and a mi fang hsien
(master of secret remedies) in Taipei. Shamans usually
appear to be consulted with reference to illnesses which
are psychosomatic in nature or those which are relatively
hopeless, i.e., medical advice has not worked. This latter
may be merely because sufficient time for medical treat-
755 ment to take effect has not elapsed. If someone is sick,
many kinds of practitioners may be consulted quickly, both
medical and religious. Serious illness in children, male
and female alike, stimulates the call for a shaman quicker
761 than would identical symptoms in adults. Shamans are
755 rarely used for old people (beyond age 60) who have not
been vigorous recently because after 60, death is consid-
ered inevitable and any years granted beyond 60 were only
due to the favor of the gods. With a terminal illness,
the family patiently waits for death without treatment.

• 793 Some of the temples in Hsin Tien and Taipei have
[787] priests such as Tao jen (Men of the tao). Priests are con-
sulted with reference to the suitability of a pair for mar-
riage (kan ming hsien) and also for illness (hung t'ou
[755] Taoist). Curing involves a procedure much like that de-
scribed for the fortune sticks in the village temple except
the stick specifies a potion to be consumed instead of a
fortune. Priests themselves do not have the specific per-
sonal powers of shamans but do have the ability to perform
[764] proper rituals. Two part-time hei t'ou (Black-headed

793 [764] Taoist priests) from Poutí officiate at almost all village funerals.

791 There are various other kinds of magicians, diviners, fortune tellers, etc., who are occasionally used by Sanlei 787 villagers. Coins, grains of rice, palm reading, and a pile of sticks are all used for predictions and explanations. The eight characters of birth (hour, day, month, year) are important both in predicting the future and determining [777] suitability of marriage partners. Astrology is well developed and the calendric cycle of good and bad days is everywhere evident.

796 793 Two part-time hung tou (red-headed Taoist priests) from Hsin Tien participate at many big ceremonies in the 796 village and li. Finally, one particular part-time shaman, 791 a fa shih and his assistant from over the mountain were 465 frequently hired for certain ceremonies. Perhaps the term hired is too strong for no fee was ever discussed when an invitation was extended but the fa shih always received a sizable gift for officiating, the equivalent of a week's pay for an experienced farm laborer, plus elaborate food. 791 This man has the ability to inspire others to go into 787 trances and then he can interpret what they say if they "speak in tongues" or read the "spirit characters" a man in a trance may write in sand which is spread in a fine layer on a table.

783 frequency during the past twenty-five years, probably for
796 two different reasons. One reason is related to the recent
176 increased prosperity. Although people seem to greatly en-
[171] joy the big festivals, they are very expensive. With the
[184] increased prosperity, there are both more ceremonies such as the "Fire Purification Ceremony" and greater participation together with increased expenditures on regular ceremonies.

The second reason is more explicitly related to the "Fire Purification Ceremony" in particular for the ceremony is considered partially a response to crises and change. During these past twenty-odd years there have been many significant events in Taiwan such as a change in the official government and a multitude of cultural and social changes accompanying the expanding economy. Moreover, there is a constant fear of a Taiwanese attack on the Mainland or a Communist attack on Taiwan. Consequently, there have been four "Fire Purification Ceremonies" in Talei Li in the past twenty-five years, two of them during our eighteen month period of study and one of the remaining two, the previous year.

783 Carrying a god's statue through the sacred fire
796 after proper ritual purifies it and helps make the god more
776 powerful and thereby, temporarily raises the rank of the temple in which the god resides. Higher rank will bring more people to the temple to worship and the more people